

## **Gov, mayors urge constituents to trade cars for bikes**

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The governor and the state's two most powerful mayors agreed Tuesday to launch a P.R. blitz this fall to get more Utahns out of their cars and onto trains, buses and bicycles.

The reasons are ample: climate change, traffic jams, air pollution and skyrocketing energy costs, to name a few. Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker and Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon, both Democrats, along with Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr., a Republican, are usual suspects when it comes to touting green policies in Utah.

Becker, since taking office in January, launched what were expected to be quarterly summits with Corroon and Huntsman. But the three power brokers quickly decided to convene monthly instead.

"We've got along really well," Becker said after Tuesday's gathering. "We find we have a lot of things to share and a lot of things in common as far as our approach."

At their June meeting, the three tackled traffic flow and light synchronization. Now, they are expanding their transportation agenda to string bike lanes throughout Salt Lake County – and the state – and push commuters to double up or ditch their cars.

They expect their informational campaign to be ready in September. Becker, who has boosted city spending on bike lanes tenfold and created a new staff slot for bikeways and trails coordinator, plans to emphasize cycling, carpooling and involving employers.

For instance, Salt Lake City offers free transit passes to all employees and has a no-idling policy for workers sitting in city vehicles for more than 10 seconds. (Becker and Corroon also plan to wage a no-idling campaign in September to get parents to shut off the engine when they are waiting to pick up their kids at school.)

Corroon, pitching a green agenda as he seeks a second term this year, is pursuing rooftop solar power for all county buildings and aims to slash energy use by 20 percent by 2009.

Huntsman, also up for re-election, can point to his leadership among Western governors in the fight against climate change and the state's soon-to-be-

implemented four-day workweek to save on the energy costs for buildings and employee commutes.

Becker also suggested that using staggered work hours, when employees have varied start and end times, could relieve those tangled rush-hour commutes.

Huntsman spokeswoman Lisa Roskelley said the regular summits have been valuable to spur “continued dialogue about what the city, the county and the state can work on together.”

“It’s working out well,” she said.

“There are ways we can collaborate that will not only benefit our governments but [also] benefit the citizens,” Corroon added.

Becker acknowledges that the three leaders have an ulterior motive in expanding bike routes: They are all cyclists. Becker and Corroon have pedaled together, and the capital’s mayor and governor are planning a joint ride. All three hope more Utahns will follow their lead and ditch the fast lane for the bike lane more often.